

Child Care Quality System: School-Age Program Quality Enhancement Fact Sheet

The School-Age Program Quality Assessment (SAPQA) measures best practices in centers serving school-age youth aged five to twelve. The tool is administered through external observations focused on both physical environment and interactions, including interactions between youth and interactions between teachers, staff and youth.



Background:

- Developed by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality in 2005
- Used in 135 networks and systems across 43 states, including state quality rating systems for child care centers
- Validated in multiple studies across a variety of program types
- For more information visit <https://forumfyi.org/weikartcenter/>

Quality measured in 70 items across 19 scales and 4 domains:

- Safe Environment (e.g., Emotional Safety, Accommodating Environment)
- Supportive Environment (e.g., Warm Welcome, Active Engagement)
- Interaction (e.g., Collaboration, Leadership)
- Engagement (e.g., Choice, Reflection)

External Observation:

- Conducted by a Weikart trained and endorsed observer
- Typically lasts between 60–90 minutes
- Includes observation of program environment and structure, small or whole group activities, and participant and teacher interaction
- Activities should be intentionally designed and have structure, however, many activities are appropriate for observation, including but not limited to:
 - Whole group activities
 - Small group activities
 - Center time



Scoring:

- Items receive a score of 1, 3, 5 or X
- 1 = practice is either not present or a negative instance of practice is observed
- 3 = practice is present and inconsistently applied or there are both positive and negative instances of practice observed
- 5 = practice is consistently present or all youth receive the appropriate intervention or offering
- X = item not scored and not used to compute observation scores. X is only allowed on specific items
- Items scoring a child's opportunity for something are based on whether the opportunity was present or explicitly offered, even if some children do not take advantage of the opportunity